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TAGS: OPRC KPAQ KMDR PREL AR AF

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFGHANISTAN AND SECRETARY CLINTON;  
2/14-16/10; BUENOS AIRES

SUMMARY

¶1. Argentine newspapers mostly limited coverage of NATO's new Afghanistan offensive and Secretary Clinton's Middle East trip to newswires. Secretary Clinton's quote that Iran is heading towards a "military dictatorship" appeared in all papers covering the story, usually as the headline. As for Afghanistan, newspapers focused on the report of twelve civilians being killed on 2/15. Nonetheless, general coverage of the offensive appeared neutral to supportive of the NATO effort. End summary.

SECRETARY CLINTON IN SAUDI ARABIA

¶2. Centrist Critica (2/16) wrote about Secretary Clinton's meeting with the King of Saudi Arabia and their discussion of Iran "turning into a military dictatorship." Critica mentioned the Secretary's position that the U.S. will only negotiate with Iran if Iran puts its nuclear program under international supervision. Also noted was the Secretary's request that Saudi Arabia compensate any disruption in petroleum exports to China if China backs sanctions against Iran.

<http://criticadigital.com/impresa/index.php?s=ecc/nota>

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¶3. An AFP newswire, headlined "Iran advancing towards a military dictatorship," appeared in largest-circulation daily Clarin (2/16). The newswire focused on Secretary Clinton's Middle East tour "in search of support for sanctions" and her belief that Iran's neighbors "have reasons to worry." Second-largest daily La Nacion and conservative Ambito Financiero both published a very small DPA newswire about the Secretary's comments regarding Iran and it becoming a military dictatorship.

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/16/elmun.do/i-02141046.htm>

[http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota\\_id=1\\_233649](http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1_233649)

NEW NATO OFFENSIVE IN AFGHANISTAN

¶4. Critica had wide coverage of the NATO offensive in Afghanistan

on 2/14 and 2/15. On 2/14, Critica created an overview of Operation Moshtarak, citing its location in "one of the principle opium markets," and saying that despite the Taliban "presenting little resistance," NATO troops were advancing slowly. The next day (2/15), Critica focused on NATO's admission that it killed "twelve civilians by error" and U.S. General McChrystal's apology. However, on 2/16, Critica only printed a small AFP newswire highlighting the Afghan government's invitation of national reconciliation to Taliban rebels, as well as NATO's decision to stop using heavy artillery to avoid civilian fatalities.

[http://criticadigital.com/impresa/index.php?s=ecc=nota](http://criticadigital.com/impresa/index.php?s=ecc=nota&nid=38599)

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¶ 15. On 2/14, Ana Baron, Clarin's Washington correspondent, wrote about Operation Moshtarak's complexities and its significance for the Afghan Army. Baron observes that although the U.S. has "launched operations of this magnitude" before in Afghanistan, Moshtarak is different that U.S. and Afghan soldiers will be fighting and planning operations "side by side." In addition, Baron stresses that the U.S. does not want to repeat its 2004 battle of Falluja, Iraq. Even though the U.S. stopped the Taliban in Falluja, the U.S. "completely destroyed" the city and "killed hundreds of innocent civilians."

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/14/elmundo/i-02139764.htm>

¶ 16. Despite 12 civilian casualties, La Nacion (2/15) headlined its reprinting of an AP newswire that NATO labeled "the largest offensive against the Taliban in years" as a "success." The rest of the newswire largely only gives facts about the operation and states that NATO "is convinced that it will take control of Marjah" within a few days.

[http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota\\_id=1\\_233288](http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1_233288)

¶ 17. Left-leaning Pagina 12 dedicated their coverage of Afghanistan to four articles from Britain's The Independent, who, on 2/15, highlighted the story of the twelve citizens killed while "taking refuge from combat." The article notes General McChrystal "leaving rapidly to apologize and order an investigation." In contrast, the article written on 2/16 focuses on NATO's successes in the region and the "sense of optimism" among Afghan soldiers. It also describes Afghan government efforts to split opposition fighters into locals, "who want to reintegrate" into society, and foreign fighters, "who want to die."

[http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-1\\_40342-2010-02-16.html](http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-1_40342-2010-02-16.html)

[http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-1\\_40295-2010-02-15.html](http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-1_40295-2010-02-15.html)

[http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-1\\_40248-2010-02-14.html](http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elmundo/4-1_40248-2010-02-14.html)

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